

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

What We Will Be

Epistle Lesson

1 John 3:1-7 (NRSV)

¹ See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³ And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. ⁴ Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Bible/Sermon Focus

This week Pastor Jim posed some ideas around salvation, God's presence, and time. How our salvation is understood as something in the past, present and future. How our relationship with God is not about a moment, but a lifetime of moments. How the grace of God works over time and in relationship.

The work of God does not happen in isolation.

In Methodism we use language around the word "grace" to explain the activity of God. As Pastor Jim pointed out there are three main types of grace that we use: prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace.

God's prevenient grace is at work in our lives before we even realize or recognize it. In God's prevenient grace God invites/nudges/calls/guides us toward faith. It is in experiencing God's justifying grace that we realize that we need God's grace and we respond to God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In God's sanctifying grace we seek to become who God is revealing us to be. We do this by becoming more like Jesus Christ in the way we live and love.

There is no where we can go where we can escape the presence of God's grace. It is an open invitation throughout our lives for us to run from, be in, or come back into relationship with God. Becoming "fully human" then, becoming more of what God has planned for us and for creation, would be a process that leads us to a life in deeper relationship with God...and into relationships with each other and creation that reflect that love and grace of God. God's grace is a gift to us. We cannot earn it. We can only respond to it.

Discussion Questions

1. We have discussed Wesleyan (Methodist) concepts of grace before. Do you feel like you have a better understanding of how the Methodist tradition understands grace to function? Reflect of this Methodist understanding of grace.
2. Were you taught that salvation was a destination or a journey? How is salvation a journey?
3. If Sanctification is us becoming who God is revealing us to be. Who do you see God revealing us to be as human family? Who do you see God revealing us to be here at Manchester UMC?

Prayer

God of Grace, you do wonderful things. You carry us though all things, you walk with us even when we do not notice, you remain always. We thank you for your active presence. We thank you for a community in which to witness you. We thank you for a church where we can walk confidently toward the future together, assured in your goodness and grace. By your Son and in your Spirit, Amen.

*If you'd like to learn more about the Century 3 Visioning Process, information and updates will be available online at:
manchesterumc.org/century3*